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*In Memoriam:*  
**Rev. Dr. LeRoy Patrick**  
**Rev. Dr. James Earl**  
*Garmon*  
**Rev. Samson Cooper**  
**Reggie Roberts**

**Rick Adams**  
**William Anderson**  
**Art Baldwin**  
**Ron Bandes**  
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**Bolden**  
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**Sister Barbara Finch**  
**Sarah Bartholomew**  
**Fisher**  
**Josh Fleitman**  
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**Walt Hales**  
**Elder Eugene Hanner**  
**H.P. Jackson**  
**Evelynn Hawkins**  
**Dr. Barbara Johnson**  
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**"Micki" McDonough**  
**Bill Neal**  
**E. Richard Phipps**  
**Betty Pickett**  
**Nikki Porter**  
**John Potter**  
**Marlene V. Ramseur**  
**Beth Schongar**  
**William "Jack" Simmons**  
**John Small**  
**Rev. Eilleen O. Smith**  
**Richard A. Stewart, Jr.**  
**Celeste Taylor**  
**Flo Taylor**  
**David Tessitor**



**C/O Freedom- Unlimited 2201 Wylie Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15219**

**412-758-7898**

**Nov. 1, 2021**

**Hon. Bill Peduto, Mayor**  
**City of Pittsburgh**  
**512 City-County Building**  
**414 Grant Street**  
**Pittsburgh, PA 15219**

**Hon. Theresa Kail Smith, President & All Members**  
**Pittsburgh City Council**  
**510 City-County Building**

**Wendell Hissrich, Director of Public Safety**  
**City of Pittsburgh**  
**400 City-County Building**  
**Pittsburgh, PA 15219**

**Scott Schubert, Chief**  
**Pittsburgh Bureau of Police**  
**1203 Western Avenue**  
**Pittsburgh, PA 15233**

**Erin K. Bruni, Manager**  
**Office of Municipal Investigation**  
**414 Grant Street, Suite 901**  
**Pittsburgh, PA 15219**

**Christopher Kearns, Superintendent**  
**Allegheny County Police Department**  
**875 Greentree Road**  
**Parkway Center 10**  
**Pittsburgh, PA 15220**

**Dear Mayor Peduto, Council President Smith & Pittsburgh City Council  
Members, Safety Director Hissrich, Chief Schubert, OMI Manager Bruni &  
Allegheny County Police Superintendent Kearns:**

**It's a LIFETIME COMMITMENT...  
African Americans VOTE in EACH and EVERY election!!"**  
Celebrating the 55th Anniversary of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Email: [b-pepinfo@b-pep.net](mailto:b-pepinfo@b-pep.net)  
Website: [www.b-pep.net](http://www.b-pep.net)

**Cynthia Vanda**  
**Karen Wright**

**I would hope that all of you believe that the death of Mr. James Rogers, which followed his arrest in the 5100 block of Harriet Street in Bloomfield on October 13, 2021 was indeed a tragedy. This death occurred the day after Mr. Rogers was tasered by a Pittsburgh police officer which followed a report that he had stolen a bicycle, though, according to reports he had returned the bicycle shortly after taking the bike for a spin around the block, and was sitting smoking a cigarette.**

**The Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP) was one of the organizations which strongly advocated for the use of tasers in Pittsburgh years ago. We were hopeful that the use of tasers would prevent some serious injuries and deaths at the hands of police, and would be a tool used to potentially de-escalate some of the interactions between police and citizens. It appears that there exists a partial video that shows an officer ordering Mr. Rogers to put his hands behind his back and then firing began the taser. It seems that this same video shows that Mr. Roger appears to try to move away and falls, and the officer appears to push him several times as he rolled to the ground. There appears to be different reports with regard to Mr. Rogers' behavior. It seems that the officer thought that Mr. Rogers had become 'non-compliant', yet there were other community reports that Mr. Rogers was treated inhumanely and treated '...like an animal'. According to one report we received there were neighbors who were distraught and bewildered by the police interaction with Mr. Rogers. On a personal note, I encountered Mr. Rogers on several occasions in the streets, when he was in need of some level of financial assistance. At no time was he ever aggressive or offensive. I think to most people it was obvious that Mr. Rogers was just in need of support.**

**We join with the Citizen Police Review Board in the concerns expressed in their meeting of Tuesday, October 26, 2021 about "... the efficacy of Taser use, and whether its use is disproportionate in various segments of the community". In that same CPRB monthly meeting concerns were expressed about the use of force as a "de-escalation" tactic or if the very concept of 'de-escalation' is being "...bastardized to become justification to use force and a marketing ploy for police equipment".**

**The death of James Rogers, I believe, makes it very clear that there indeed an *immediate* need to review any and all policies related to the use of tasers, as well as a thorough review of how officers are trained in the police academy as to how, when and how often it would**

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be appropriate to use the taser. This review should also occur within the Allegheny County Police Department as well.  
We call for a full, thorough and immediate investigation into all facets of the death of James Rogers, including how EMS dealt with this situation as well.

The sad news is, with regard to the death of James Rogers, according to a neighbor, Ms. Susan Veraldi, the bike that, indirectly led to Mr. Roger's death, "...had been sitting there for sale for a long time, but the sign wasn't even on there anymore because the kid's mother said 'If anybody wants it, just take it'...Supposedly, this man was walking around here, and he got on the bike and rode it around". As the Black Political Empowerment Project we can't help but wonder if all of the Pittsburgh police officers are trained sufficiently in how to properly interact with such non-threatening situations. This tragedy also re-emphasizes the call from the Mayor's Police Reform Task Force, of which I was a member, which called for the 're-imagining" of policing in Pittsburgh, and called for a significant increase in the use of social workers and trained mental health workers to assist the police in such non-threatening situations. We cannot bring Mr. Rogers back, but we can all do what we must to insure that his death was not in vain!

Sincerely,

*Tim Stevens*

Tim Stevens, Chairman & CEO  
The Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP)  
412-758-7898

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